

# Project Proposal: Endurance Triathlon – Zurich to Lyon



Lake Zurich

<http://travelinnate.com>

## Aims

- To complete a multi-day triathlon over 10 days.
- Cycle from Zurich to Lyon (550km)
- Swim in Lake Zurich, Lake Zug, Lake Lucerne and Lake Geneva.
- Run across five trail routes



Lake Geneva

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## Introduction

### Objectives

To complete a 12-day expedition cycling from Zurich to Marseille, via Lyon, through navigating the Seen Cycle Route 9 (Lakes Route) and the Rhone Cycle Route 1. The trip will consist of 6 days cycling, 5 days swimming in 4 lakes (Zurich, Zug, Lucerne and Geneva) and 5 days trail running. We want to continue to reach a wide audience with our adventures after our Estonia 2016 Expedition diary was viewed 1000 times on our blog and published in Imperial Engineers and ULTRA running magazine.

### Why we choose an endurance triathlon

An endurance triathlon encompasses:

1. Triathlons over the Olympic distance such as a half Ironman or a full Ironman.
2. Multiday triathlons of any distance above Olympic.

We are currently training for the 2017 triathlon season and this expedition will be a great way to practice cycling on more difficult terrain and open water swimming techniques. In the future we are aiming to complete an Ironman triathlon; an expedition such as this will be an invaluable experience.

### Why we choose Switzerland

The Seen Cycle Route 9 is an easy to navigate route linking some of the most beautiful and clean lakes in the world – all of which are safe to swim in. It also includes some unforgettable mountain scenery within the Swiss Alps. Switzerland has 9,000km of cycle networks which are regularly maintained by the government. The Seen Cycle Route 9 uses either tertiary roads to avoid heavy traffic or bike lanes.

The route includes the Entlebuch UNESCO Biosphere Reserve which is a protected area with forests and highland marshes and Chillon Castle, Veytaux, which overlooks Lake Geneva.



Entlebuch UNESCO Biosphere



Chillon Castle and Lake Geneva

Complex geology with dolomitic peaks and extreme landscapes carved by glaciers is of great interest to us as we are both Earth Scientists.

One of the highlights of the Estonia Expedition was seeing 2 baby brown bears, a red squirrel and some beautiful caterpillars and butterflies. Switzerland also has some amazing wildlife including red deer, ibex and marmots.

## **Team**

We have been running together for over 2 years and in 2016 we had a fastpacking expedition across Estonia (375 km). We have both completed the Merlin field safety and first aid training course. Together we have run 2 marathons and numerous half marathons together and regularly go on hiking and cycling weekends away.

## **Tom's Experience**

I'm a fourth year Geologist and a keen runner, hiker, cyclist and footballer. I run regularly with Imperial Cross Country and Athletics Club, have done many weekends hiking throughout the UK and have spent over 16 weeks on fieldtrips since I started studying Geology.

- Bacchus Trail Marathon (9<sup>th</sup> overall)
- Valencia Marathon
- Trail and road half marathons
- Yorkshire 3 Peaks Challenge (x3)
- Silver and Bronze Duke of Edinburgh awards, spending in total over two weeks orienteering and camping
- 3 weeks camping alone in Scotland in July 2014
- 6 weeks independent mapping in El Pont de Suert, Spanish Pyrenees, walking on average 10 miles a day
- 12-day fastpacking expedition across Estonia

## **Catherine's Experience**

I am in my 4th year, reading Geophysics and am a keen runner, cyclist and swimmer. I run regularly with Tom and also with IC Cross-Country and Athletics Club. I am on the 1<sup>st</sup> team for Women's Waterpolo and RSM Women's hockey. I am a qualified swimming teacher and have experience with swimming first aid and pool side rescue.

- Bacchus Trail Marathon (4<sup>th</sup> woman)
- Valencia Marathon
- Yorkshire 3 Peaks Challenge (completed less than 2 weeks after the Bacchus Marathon)
- Surrey Spitfire 20 Miler
- Trail and road half marathons
- 3<sup>rd</sup> in Borough Cross Country (2012) and competed at County level (2011, 2012).
- Hiking weekends in the UK
- 12-day fastpacking expedition across Estonia

## Itinerary

### Travel

In order to take our bikes with us, we will have to travel by train to Zurich and from Lyon.

Day	Date	Itinerary
1	12/07	Fly to Zurich. Cycle around Lake Zurich and swim in lake.
2	13/07	Cycle to Lucerne. Run and Swim.
3	14/07	Run and Swim. Stay in Lucerne.
4	15/07	Cycle to Interlaken.
5	16/07	Run and Swim Interlaken. Cycle to Bern.
6	17/07	Cycle to somewhere before Geneva. Cycle to Lausanne
7	18/07	Cycle to Geneva.
8	19/07	Swim and run Geneva.
9	20/07	Cycle to Lyon
10	21/07	Cycle to Dijon. Train to Dijon after day of thunderstorms.
11	22/07	Train Dijon to Paris, Paris to London

## Route

### Zurich- Lyon - Dijon Cycling

We are going to cycle from Zurich to Geneva, following the Cycle Seen 9 and the Cycle Rhone 1 routes. These are clearly signposted, with an example of a route sign below:



The sections we are taking will be fully paved, and updates on the condition of the route can be seen on the website. There are 100s of different cycling routes through Switzerland and so if the route became closed for any reason there would be numerous other options available for us. We already

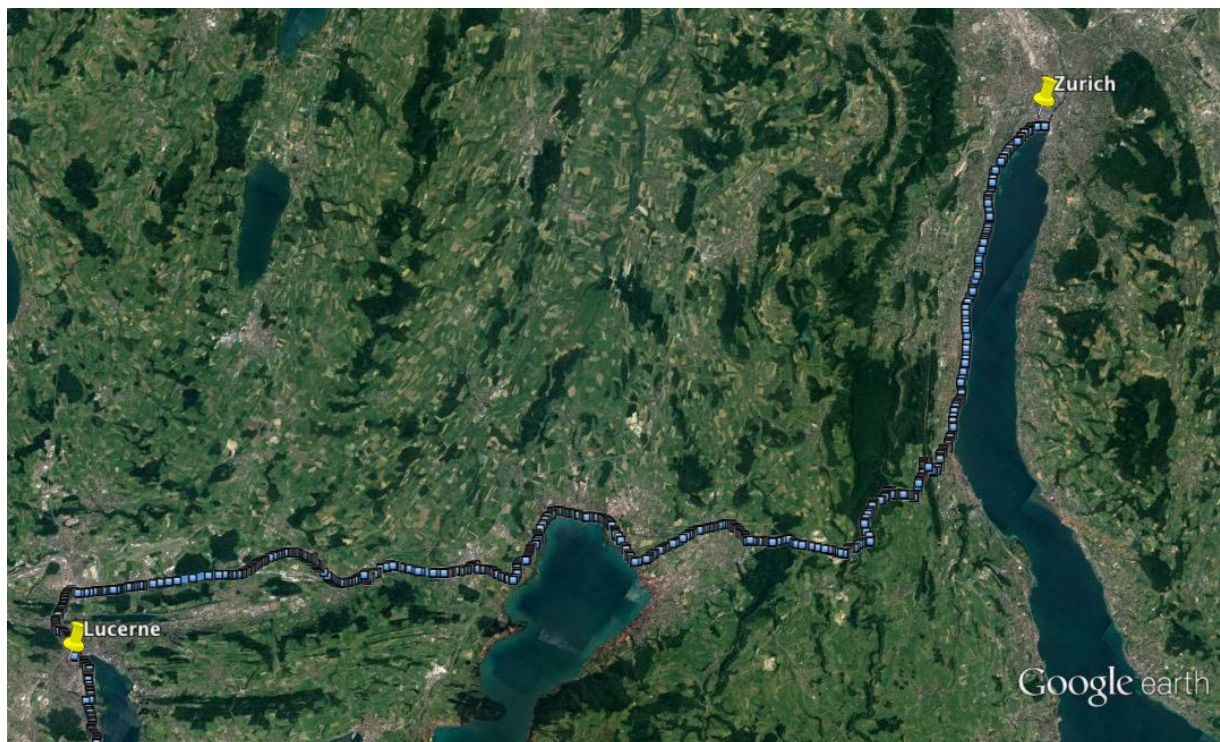
have a comprehensive cycling map of Switzerland with these routes plotted on it. The average distance we are cycling in a day is 125km, and maximum cycle distances we are going to be doing are similar in distance to the cycle leg of an Ironman triathlon (180km), and so they are equivalent of running a marathon, and we do this four times towards the end of the expedition.

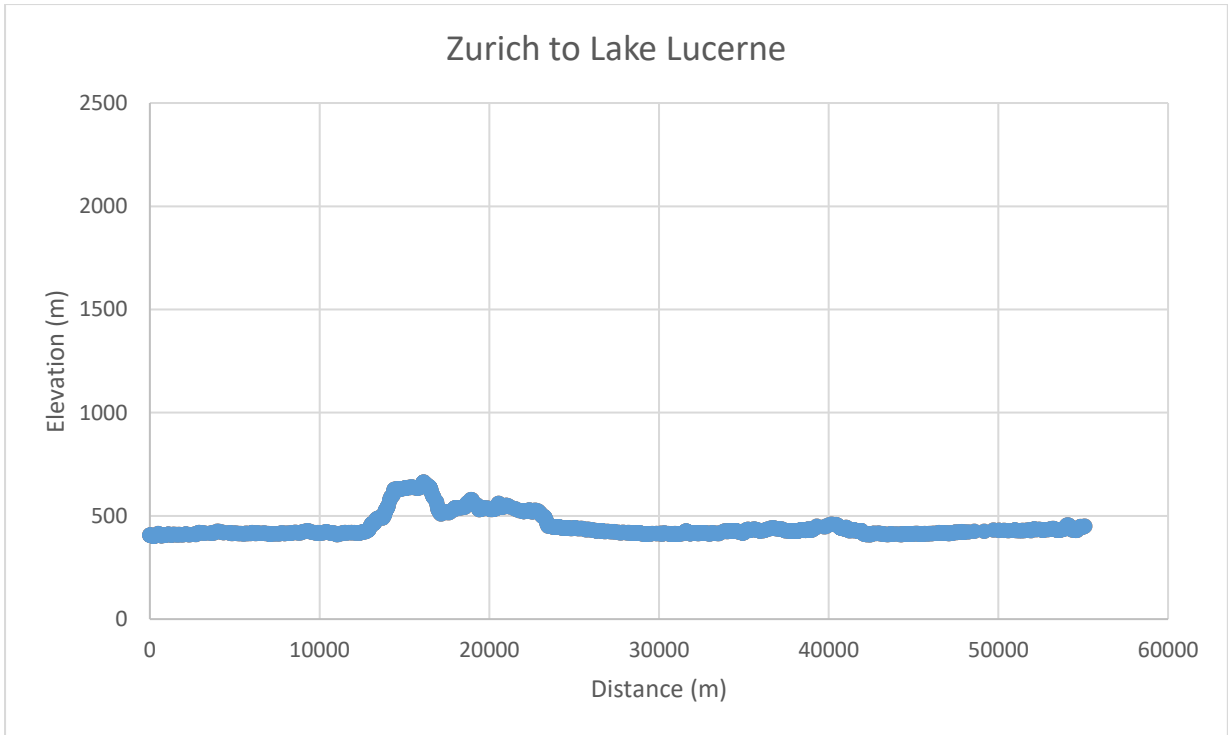
After Geneva, the two routes are discontinued, but there are many other smaller cycling routes that join up. We will follow these to Lyon, and then follow the Rhone River towards the Mediterranean Sea at Marseille, again along cycle paths.

The 9 Eurovelo route was not completely paved, as stated on the website, with large sections consisting of large gravel pieces, unsuitable for our bikes. After cycling from Luzern to Ligerne, we encountered a large gravel section so changed the route to climb up the Bruing Pass. We also added an additional day of cycling instead of staying in Interlaken for 2 nights by cycling to Bern.

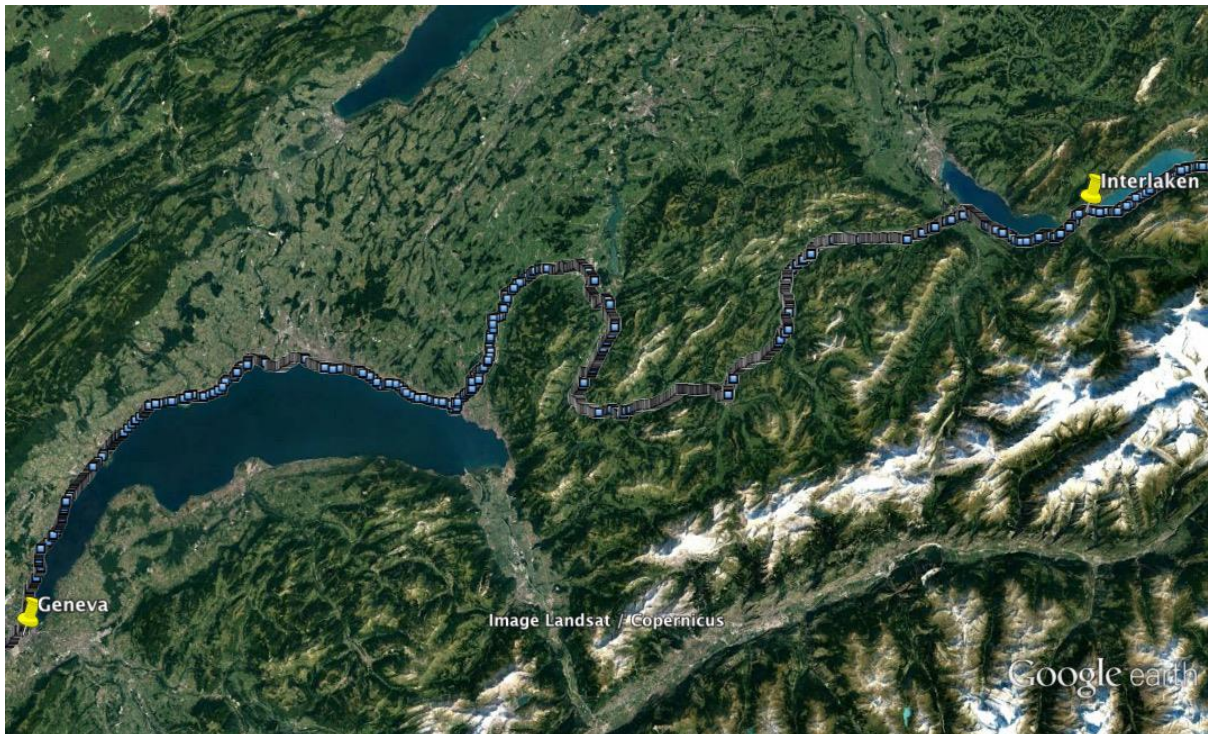
We had initially planned to cycle to Marsaille but it would then have been impossible to get our bikes back (as we were finishing the same day the Tour de France was in the area). So we changed our route to cycle to Dijon instead. As we approached Lyon, a huge thunderstorm started and continued intermittently into the next day, making it unsafe to cycle to Dijon.

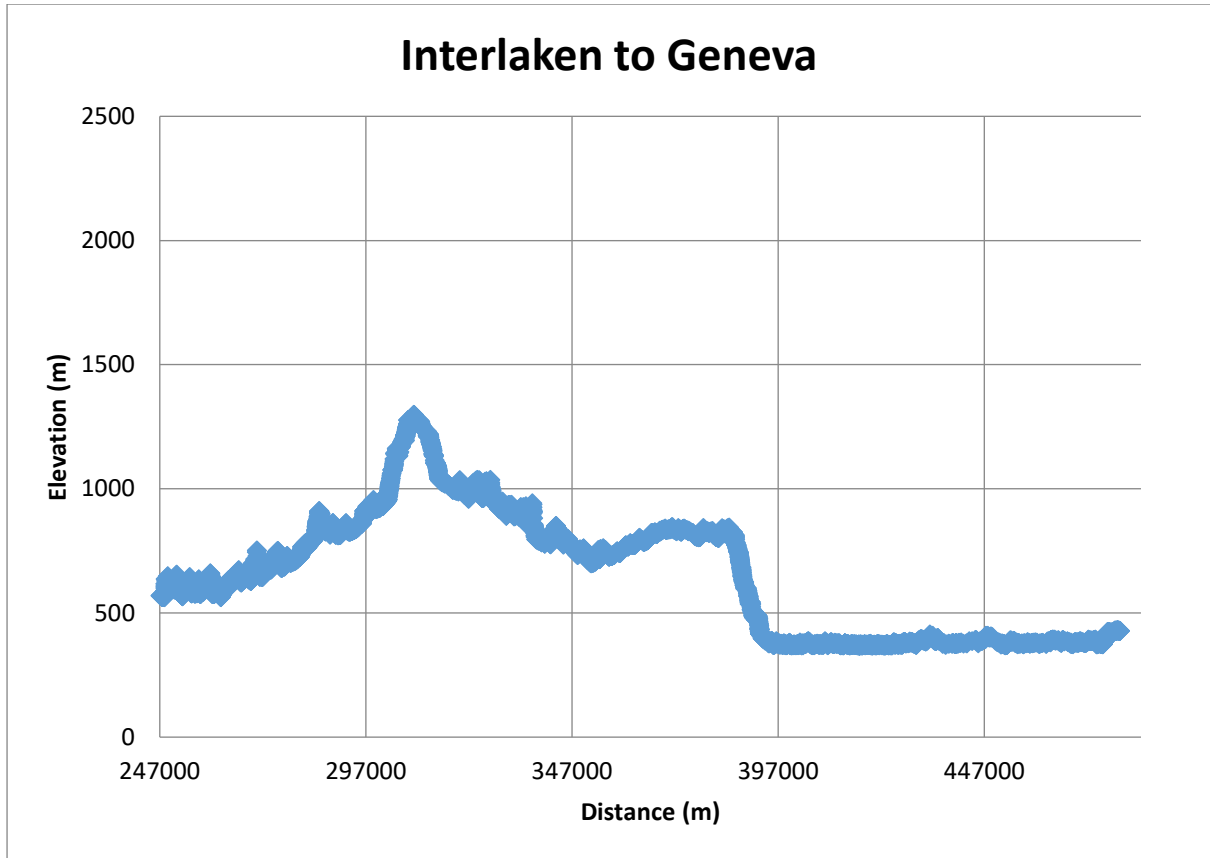
**Zurich to Lake Lucerne = 55 km**



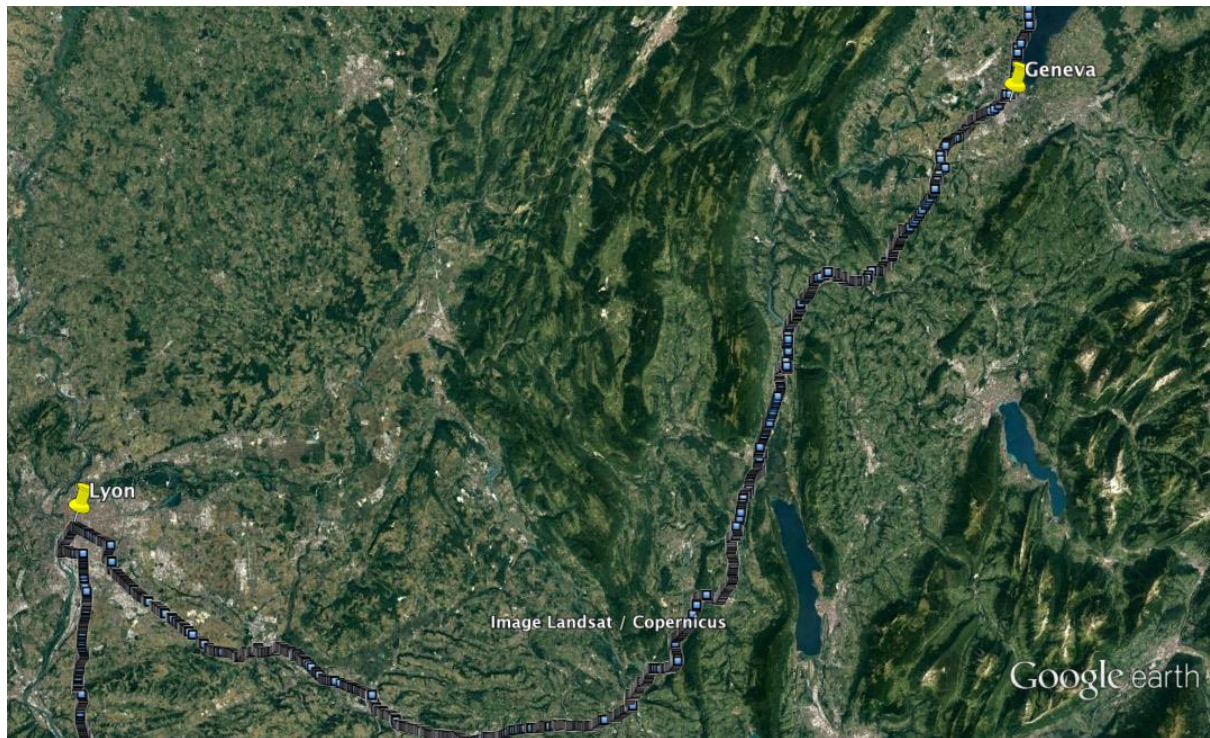


**Interlaken to Geneva = 233 km**

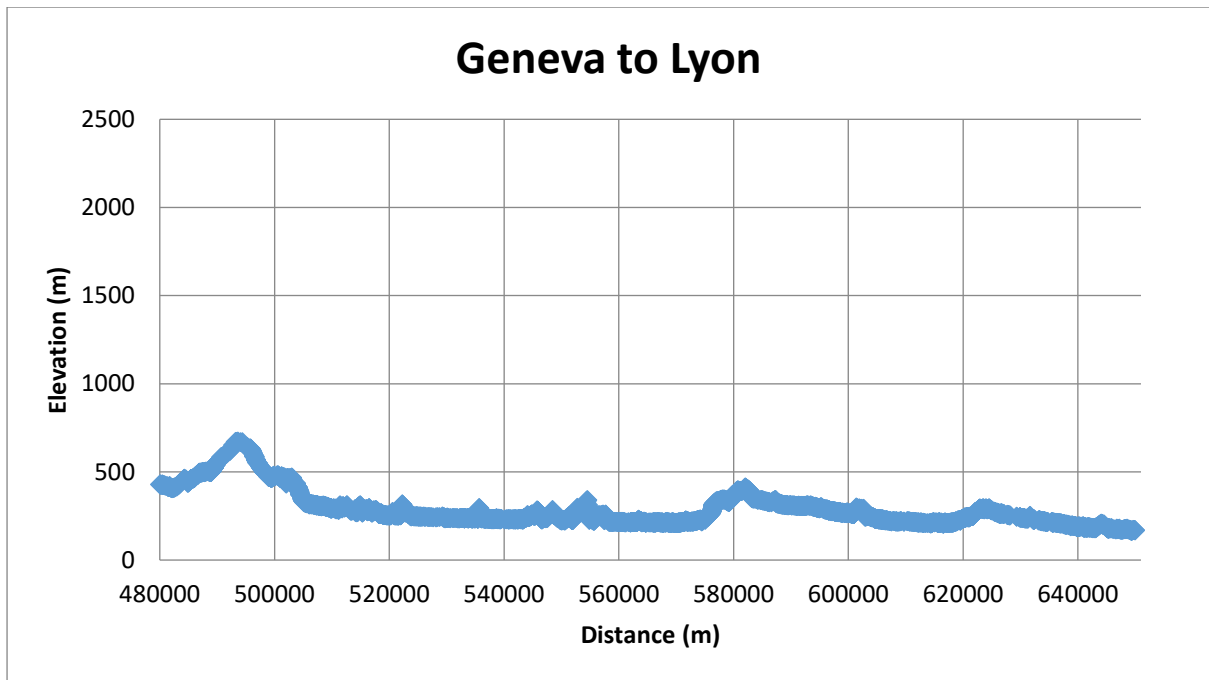




**Geneva to Lyon = 170 km**







**Lyon to Dijon = 200km**

View of route: <https://www.strava.com/routes/9397067>

All days now plotted on Tom's strava for navigation purposes. **Using Strava made the route easily navigatable when not on the EuroVelo route.**

## Runs

We are planning to do five days of running during the trip. These will mostly be hills, and the routes are used for races at other times of the year.

**Day 2** – We will run around set trails through either Uetliberg forest or Burglen forest, depending on our accommodation. We will run around 20 miles. **We did not run in Zurich in the end, instead we cycled straight to Luzern and did some hiking that evening on Pilatus with our host.**

**Day 3** – This is a short but intense 14km run up and down the route of the Zugerberg classic, near to Lake Zug. **Our accomdation changed to be on the far side of Lucern for 2 nights so had to settle for a nearby forest (where we found European terrapins!!).**

**Day 7** – We will run along the Hardergrat trail near Interlaken. The entire route is 25km, but this is along a ridge and so running up to the top of the ridge and back will be a good test of fitness. **Due to an added day of cycling so we could go to Bern, we decided to catch the fenicular up the ridge and run down. The run down still took 1.5 hours!**

**Day 9** – We will 27km run near to Lake Geneva, again along the Alpine Panorama Trail, to the Quai du Mont Blanc. **We changed our accommodation again to be too far away from this trail.**

Overall, the runs were not as successful as planned, with our hosts accompanying us, we often switched to hiking instead of running. Our legs were very happy with this as they were tired from all the cycling!



## Swimming

We will be swimming in Lake Zurich, Lake Zug, Lake Lucerne, **Lake Ligerne**, Lake Brienz (**changed to Lake Burg**) and Lake Geneva. In each of these there are lidos open to the public, and there are many swimming races and triathlons that use these lakes, and so areas within the areas that are safe are known. We will be doing Ironman swim distances, around 3.8km, which is equivalent to running a marathon.

Due to limits on Lake Zurich, we will have to swim in zig-zags, returning to the shore after swimming 250m due to boats. **We had so much fun swimming in Switzerland, most of the lakes were warm at this time of year so wetsuits weren't necessary. We didn't record any distances but spent so much time swimming that we astounded some of our hosts! We also went for a swim in the river Aare in Bern, a very fast flowing river that transports you downstream, passed the houses of Parliament.**

## Accommodation

With our light-weight tent in Estonia attracting a lot of attention, and the fact that as we are taking our bikes with us, we have decided not to camp for this expedition – it would mean leaving the bikes in an unattended campsite while we went swimming or running, and this could quite easily lead to them being stolen, which would mean the expedition had to finish. The trip has been organised to need 11 nights' accommodation in 7 locations to minimise the expense (2 nights in Zurich, 2 nights between Lake Zug and Lake Lucerne, 1 nights in Interlaken, 2 nights in Geneva, 1 night in Lyon and 1 night in Dijon). We have looked at the cheapest options extensively, and having single rooms through Airbnb is the cheapest option, apart from in Zurich where a hostel is the cheapest. These will be booked later as the availability is very high.

We signed up to a cycling backpacking website called Warmshowers which allowed us to stay with other cyclists. We had a great time getting to know these people and hear about their cycling adventures. They were very kind and fed us both dinner and breakfast as well as showing us the sights of their town and introducing us to the local culture. We learnt a lot about Switzerland during our trip and would fully recommend this to any future touring trips.

## Food

Our budget for Estonia was abided to for all aspects of the trip except food. Unforeseeable circumstances with the courier losing a food parcel and then refusing to deliver to the last location without us providing a monetary incentive (although they agreed to do it without an excess charge in email exchanges) resulted in us going £120 over budget. To avoid this, we will be buying food from local supermarkets. As we are staying in hostels and Airbnb we will have access to a kitchen to cook. We will, however, take some energy bars with us to ensure we have the correct amount of calories for how active we will be. There are many supermarkets in Zurich, Geneva, Lucerne, Interlaken and the many small villages around the lakes, especially Lake Lucerne and Lake Zug. In the smaller villages, supermarkets will probably not be open on Sundays, but in the main cities this won't be a problem. Food was extremely expensive in Switzerland so we were very grateful that all our hosts offered to feed us dinner, meaning we only had to buy lunch on most days.

## Kit

Our kit from the Estonia Expedition will be reused and we will have room for multiple sets of clothes. The temperature during the expedition will be higher than we experienced in Estonia, with highs of over 25°C, and so we will plan accordingly with less layers needed.

Clothes:

- Long sleeved top
- Leggings each
- Running shorts
- cycling shorts
- cycling vest
- Running socks, cycling socks, casual socks
- Cycling overshoes
- Underwear – x2 each
- Warm gloves
- Sunglasses
- Cycling gloves
- Bandanna/ ear warmers each
- Waterproof trousers and jacket
- Running shoes
- Casual clothes – top, shorts
- Swimming trunks and hat
- Goggles
- Ultra-belt

#### Sporting equipment:

- Alpkit Viper headtorch each
- Travel towel x2
- Bike each
- Helmet each
- Bike lock x1
- Water bottle cage x4
- Water bottle x4
- Spare inners x2 each
- Saddle bag each
- Top tube bag each
- Handle bar bag each
- Lights each
- Pump x1
- Tyre lever x1
- Allan key x1
- Phone attachment

#### Other:

- GPS (141g) and maps – Switzerland, France
- Passport/EHIC/Booking forms
- Mobile phone and charging kit and charger and adapter
- Toothbrush and toothpaste and other toiletries
- Money/debit card

#### First Aid Kit:

- Imodium, ibuprofen, paracetamol, hand gel, sun cream, duct tape, tweezers, wet wipes
- blister plasters and plasters
- Emergency survival bag (241g)
- Water purification tablets

On the runs we will carry only what is necessary for the day of running, such as waterproof clothing, water, first aid kit and any food we will need. We will use two panniers, and our rucksacks to carry all of our clothes, food and equipment.

The equipment worked well for our expedition, although all our hosts remarked how light we were travelling! Tom had to carry slightly more because Catherine's handlebar bag and seat bag couldn't be filled completely as her bike was smaller.

## Risk assessment

Risk/ Hazard	Consequences	Likelihood	Seriousness	Risk Factor	Control Measures
Blisters	Pain when running and possible infection	3	2	6	Take blister plasters and deal with blisters immediately. Make sure shoes are worn in beforehand. See foot care in Appendix
Dehydration	Dizziness causing delay. Possible death if severe	2	4	8	Boil water from bogs and get water from huts. Carry extra water. Use purification tablets
Sunburn	Painful to carry rucksack. Blisters prone to infection	2	2	4	Use sun cream (SPF 50) and reapply throughout day. Keep shoulders covered.
Gastrointestinal sickness	Diarrhoea leads to dehydration. Vomiting and blood/mucus in stools	1	3	3	Filter all water and practice strict food hygiene. Do not share water bottles. Drink plenty and take rehydration tablets. Contact medical help if symptoms are severe or are persistent.
Muscle injuries	Pain running and progress slower	2	2	4	Stretch at the beginning and end of each day. Take care of uneven paths to avoid pulling muscles. Sufficient training also helps avoid injury
Broken bones	Unable to run. Unable to move if large bone. Could mean heavy bleeding	1	3	3	First Aid training so broken bone can be stabilised quickly. Location of hospitals near the route has been created. Contact emergency services
Small cuts and minor burns	Might be painful to run	2	1	2	First Aid training to treat burns and cuts.
Deep cuts and severe burns	Confusion and dizziness due to blood loss. Possible death	1	3	3	First Aid training for preliminary treatment and to stem blood loss for major cuts. Contact emergency services and keep injured member warm and comfortable
Sprains	Painful to run	2	2	4	Appropriate footwear and caution when running on uneven or slippery surfaces. First aid training to stabilise area and reduce pain
Exhaustion	Slower progress	2	2	4	Use rest days to recover. We have shorter days that can extended and harder days shortened if a day needs to be cut short for rest
Too unfit	Increased risk of injuries. Slower progress	1	2	2	Adequate training plan and practice of multiday events

Heat exhaustion	Body temperature too high. Possible dehydration. Can cause dizziness and tiredness, delaying progress	1	2	2	Drink plenty of water and avoid running at maximum sunlight. Wear hats and take regular breaks to cool down
Hypothermia	Body temperature too low. Can cause dizziness and tiredness, delaying progress	2	2	4	Have multiple layers available. Know where nearest town is for shelter if necessary. Pitch tent if needed. Emergency kit available.
Allergic Reaction	Death if severe	1	2	2	Know of all possible allergens, and avoid consuming.
Getting lost	Could run out of supplies, therefore possible death. Substantial delays to trip	3	2	6	Continue using navigational skills. Multiple maps taken. However, route marked. Sign in at huts and use satellite phone. Carry GPS and spare batteries at all times. Be able to triangulate.
Theft	Supplies and equipment stolen	1	3	3	Stay away from main roads unless necessary, and don't show any valuables in clear sight.
Bad Weather	Increased risk of slips and falls. Also wet clothes drops body temperature	3	1	3	Check weather forecast. Emergency survival bag purchased.
Road Crash	Broken bones or possible death	2	4	8	No hitch-hiking. Use qualified drivers.
Fire	Burns and possible death	1	4	4	Keep flammable equipment away from cooking equipment when in use.
Rucksack breaking	Unable to carry equipment	1	2	2	Make sure equipment is in good condition prior to start of expedition.
Bike crash	Death or possible severe injury.	2	4	8	Wear helmet and avoid major roads. Aware of vehicles.
Bike breaks	Delay in progress or cancellation of trip.	2	3	6	Experienced in fixing bikes. Emergency exit plans.
Accommodation	Refused stay or feel unsafe.	1	4	4	Only stay at places with good reviews. Always stay together.
Drowning	Death or serious injury.	2	4	8	Training in outdoors to get used to temperatures. Always stay within 250m of shoreline and swim in zig-zag pattern, returning to shallow water regularly. Swimming in designated areas away from boats. Not swimming in tidal current area
Blue-green algae	Stomach upset.	1	2	2	Check official websites prior to swimming. Check water quality visually. Algae more common in warm weather.
Altitude sickness	Dizziness and vomiting	1	2	2	Altitude not too extreme. Similar to previous locations we have visited

					and have not had problems. Make sure to stop and take a break if either one of us gets dizzy.
Hair pin corners	Falling off bike or crashing into a car, leading to an extreme injury or death	1	4	4	Don't use the racing line to go down passes. If an accident occurs call ambulance immediately.

Likelihood and Seriousness scale = 1-4, with 1 being low and 4 being high.

Risk Factor = Likelihood x Seriousness. Max value = 16.

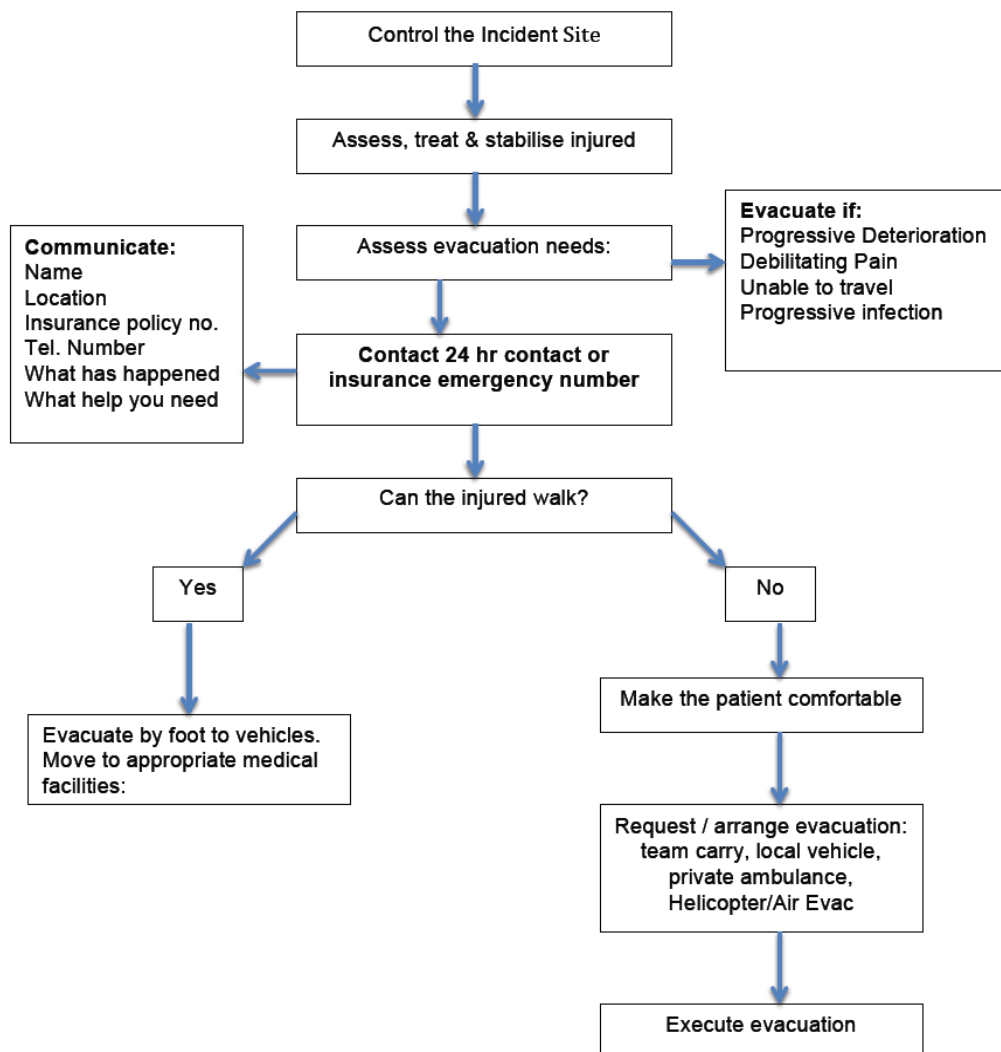
## Evacuation Plan

### Emergency Contact Numbers

In case of an emergency the satellite phone provided by the Imperial Exploration Board will be used.

Who or What	Number
Ambulance and fire brigade	112
Police	110
Tom's next of kin (Deborah Raven)	07446932124
Catherine's next of kin (Jane Spurin)	07740359164
British Embassy in Switzerland	+41 31 359 77 00
British Embassy in France	+33 1 44 51 31 00
Department of Health Overseas Healthcare Team (only needed if we misplace EHIC cards)	+44 191 218 1999
Imperial College Security on call Support No. (24/7):	020 7589 1000 or 0207 594 8910

The Emergency Response Procedure for this expedition is detailed below. Extracted from the Evacuation Procedure created for the Geophysics Society Fieldtrip to Mount Etna, where Catherine was one of the group leaders for the excursion.



## Scenarios

### Broken leg or ankle

Stabilise the leg or ankle and make sure person is comfortable. It is unlikely in this situation that evacuation on foot is possible but situation serious enough to warrant evacuation. Call ambulance if area accessible from road or in forest area. If not call air ambulance. Location must be known for this. We can do using the GPS tracker we have on us. A broken leg or ankle would mean the end of the expedition. After treated at hospital either make way back to Zurich or bus to Bern, Geneva or Lyon as these have easy trains to get back to UK.

### Broken arm or wrist

Stabilise the wrist and arm in a sling to prevent movement. Assess if evacuation is possible on foot. The map of hospitals shows that we are typically within 50km of a hospital. So either call an ambulance or walk to a medical centre for proper treatment. If only a cast is required, the trip could continue with added caution. However, a sling would be dangerous to fastpack in and thus journey back to UK would need to be considered.



## Drowning

Catherine is a trained swim teacher and has training in poolside rescue so can safely rescue Tom if needed. Tom will do training in case Catherine needs rescue. We will have assessed the location of buoys before starting the swim, allowing a quicker rescue. Get an onlooker to call an ambulance or call an ambulance.

## Training

### Running:

We both currently run 4 times a week, following Catherine's marathon training plan as she has a London Marathon place, and then an ultramarathon plan for the Endure24 race. We are currently planning the following events in the run up and aftermath of the London Marathon.

Wimbledon Half Marathon – 2<sup>nd</sup> April

London Marathon (Catherine) – 23<sup>rd</sup> April

Training weekend – 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> January

BUCs X-country (Catherine) – 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> February

Endure24 – 1<sup>st</sup> July

### Cycling:

Regular cycle trips to Box Hill and Richmond

New Forest Training weekend March

Strawberry Line Training weekend May

Cycle to Yorkshire from London June

Cycle to Brighton from London May

Hill training in Yorkshire Dales June

### Swimming:

Currently swimming twice a week together and Catherine plays waterpolo. We wish to buy the wetsuits soon and start practicing in the Serpentine and other open water locations.

Open water swim from Poole harbour to Brownsea Island in May.

**Our training went well and we were fully prepared for the expedition.**

## Weather

We are planning to undertake this trip during early July. The temperature range will be between 12°C and 23°C. However, wind chill when cycling will mean that it will feel like the low 10s. There will be 15-16 hours of sunlight each day, allowing for long distances to be covered without cycling in the dark. Light rain showers are to be expected, especially in the mountains where the weather can change quickly, so waterproofs and overshoes are needed as well as lights for running and for our bikes. We will also need multiple layers to put on at the top of the mountain passes, as the descent can get cold quickly. As we are going to go to quite high altitude, the sun will become very strong, particularly during the middle of the day, and so we will need to use sun cream and wear long sleeves to protect from sunburn, as well as sunglasses to protect our eyes.

Peaks for water temperature are in July-August. Predictions for Lake Zurich for June/ July time are 18°C but could be as low as 13°C which is the temperature wetsuits are required in triathlon races. As we aren't racing, we will wear a wetsuit when swimming at all times. Temperature predictions are similar for all lakes, Interlaken is at the highest altitude and has the lowest average of 13°C.

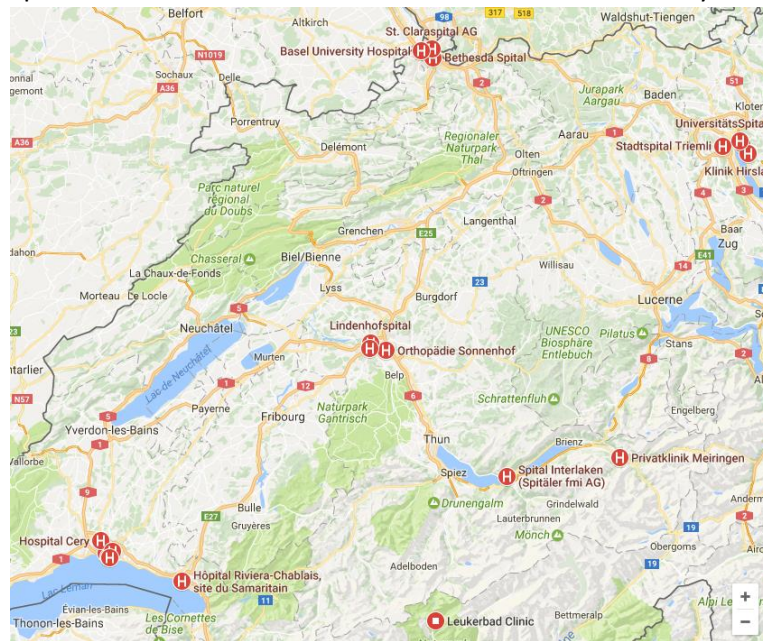
## Landscape

We are cycling through quite a mountainous region. The elevation changes are quite dramatic between Luzern and Interlaken, and this will be the toughest part of the trip in terms of cycling, but it is also a beautiful area. The cycling route either side of Luzern – Interlaken will be relatively flat, as it is along the Lakes Route, with only one elevation increase before Lake Geneva. After Geneva, the elevation drops until Lyon, where we will follow the Rhone River to the sea.

In summer there is the possibility of ticks but ibex and other mountainous wildlife are of no threat.

## Hospitals

The map shows hospitals in Switzerland. We are never more than 40km away from a hospital.



## Finances Final

### Travel

Flight from London to Gatwick + bikes - £163.40

Train Dijon to Paris Bercy - £79.09

Emergency train Lyon to Dijon due to thunderstorms – £42.77

EuroDespatch for bikes - £52.34

Eurostar to London from Paris - £114

Train from Zurich airport to Zurich - £10.57

Total Original Proposal - £384

Final Total - £462.17

Final total higher due to extra train and Eurostar being more expensive than the original find of £86 for both of us.

### Kit

Wetsuits – £212.96

Saddle bags - £119.98

Handle bar bags - £89.98

Top tube bags - £37.76

Lock - £16.18  
Sunglasses Catherine - £17.06  
Bottle cages - £4.75  
Overshoes Catherine - £8.97  
Overshoes Tom - £17.07  
Inner tubes x 4 - £23.96  
Tom's bike service - £24

Total Original Proposal - £720

Total Final - £590.37

Savings were made as wetsuits were ~£120 cheaper than expected and we did not need swimming gloves or shoes.

Extras

Bubble wrap - £6.81

Box tape - £3.73

Clingfilm - £11.27

Chamois Cream - £11.67

Phone charger in Zurich as Tom forgot his and phone was needed for navigation... - £14.98

Total - £48.46

### **Food**

Total - £409.45

### **Accommodation**

1 night in Dijon - £55.37

Overall - £1610.37

# Cycle Tour: The Lakes of Switzerland

*A 554km cycle from Zurich to Geneva over the course of a week (with an additional day of cycling to Lyon so that we could get a train back to London). This was our first cycle tour, having taken up the sport less than 6 months before.*

## Overview



**Start:** Zurich, Switzerland

**End:** Lyon, France

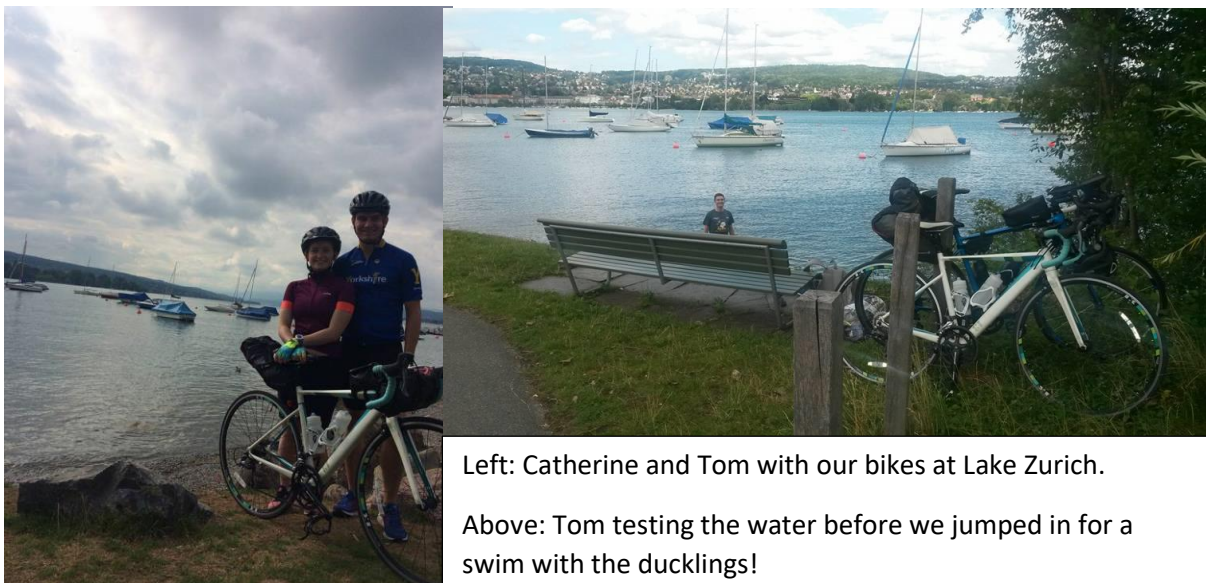


**Travel:** We flew to Zurich with our bikes dismantled but returned to London via train with our bikes assembled.

**Bikes:** We took 2 road bikes equipped with a top tube bag, an outpost seat pack and a handlebar roll bag. The bags we took were sufficient for our equipment and food (although it should be noted that we didn't take any camping equipment) but our tyres were slightly too thin for the EuroVelo 9 route, which we had initially planned on following, as large sections of it were paved large pieces of gravel. We, therefore, had to adapt our route to roads more suited for our road bike tyres and whilst doing this, we decided to take a detour and cycle to Bern as well.

**Day 1:** We had a very early (7am) flight from London to Zurich to start our trip. In order to take our bikes on the plane, we had to take off the handlebar, seat and front tyre, deflate both tyres, wrap everything up in \*a lot\* of bubble wrap and pray to the aeroplane gods for our bikes to arrive safely in Zurich. Thankfully, they allowed our bikes to fly without being damaged which meant we could swiftly reassemble our bikes in Zurich (by swiftly we mean it took nearly 2 hours, but that's mainly because Catherine put her handlebars on backwards the first time...). We promptly cycled to Lake Zurich for the first lake of our tour where we swam in the beautiful, crystal clear water and had a catch up with a friend who was also in Switzerland at the same time as us.

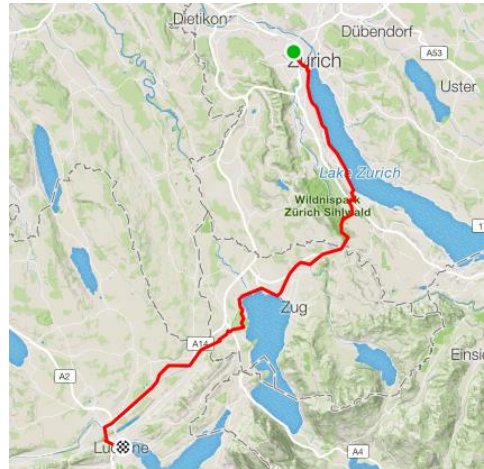
As Switzerland is a very expensive country (and by expensive, I mean a tub of Ben and Jerry's costs about £10) so we stayed with other cyclists from the Warmshowers cycling community, an online group of cyclists who offer up their spare beds when they are not touring themselves. This meant we finished our first day of cycling with very little mileage and a beautiful meal cooked by our host.



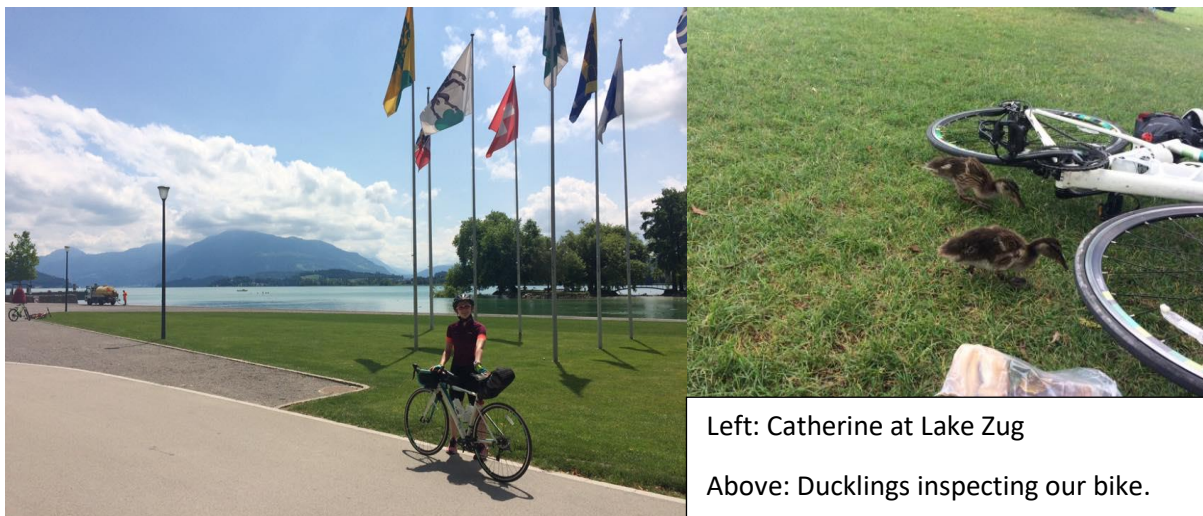
Left: Catherine and Tom with our bikes at Lake Zurich.

Above: Tom testing the water before we jumped in for a swim with the ducklings!

**Day 2:** A short 60km cycle to Luzern via Zug was our plan for our 2<sup>nd</sup> day. Instead of following the River Rues to Zug, we went along Lake Zurich and then almost up and over the Burglen mountain peak. With gradients of up to 22%, parts of the morning turned out to be hill running rather than cycling but we did eventually joined the river, which was much flatter.



We stopped for lunch by Lake Zug where we had a small paddle with the ducklings before tucking into our sandwiches. The ducklings did join us for lunch but decided cycling wasn't for them. We continued to Luzern following the EuroVelo 9 route, although parts of it were unpaved.



Left: Catherine at Lake Zug  
Above: Ducklings inspecting our bike.

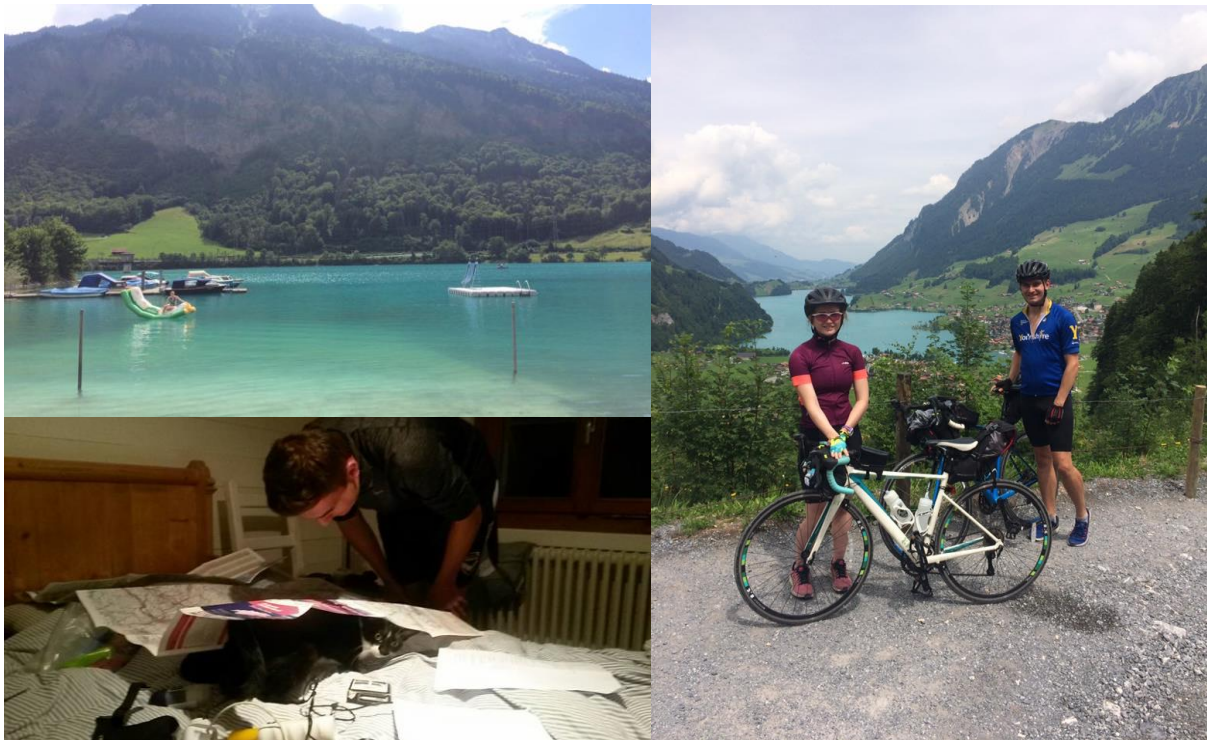
**Day 3:** We took a break from the bikes on our 3<sup>rd</sup> day to explore the area by foot. We woke to torrential rain that got worst the second we got outside. But we didn't let that put us off and so went for a hike with our host, where we found wild turtles! Our host made for a fantastic tour guide, explaining how the history of Switzerland is much less neutral than we thought. We finished our great, but very wet day, by going for a swim in Lake Luzern.



Left: The Chapel Bridge. Unfortunately the original bridge burnt down in 1993, destroying the art along the bridge but the other bridge contained a lot of macabre paintings depicting death and misfortune experienced by different social classes.

Right: The wall encompassing the old town in Luzern.

**Day 4:** After a day off from cycling, it was time to climb! The first tough climb of the day was into the town of Lugern, which was short but steep, made more difficult by the 30°C heat. We stopped at Lake Lugern to cool off and for a quick swim. The actually swimming was cut short by the presence of a slide and see-saw into the lake... We then continues to climb up the Brunig Pass which was a much longer climb but had great views at the top. Over the 93km we cycled from Luzern to Interlakken on Day 4, we climbed a total of 2034m. We were rewarded with cheese from our host's cow and schnapps made from grapes grown in our host's garden! We decided that we wanted to change our route so that we could visit Switzerland's capital, Bern, during our trip and had lots of help planning this change in route from both our lovely host for the night and his cat.



Top Left: Catherine on the see-saw in Lake Lugern after a tough climb.  
Bottom Left: Tom planning the route to Bern (with some help)

Right: Picture break half way up the Brunig Pass.

**Day 5:** This made for quite a busy day because of our change of plan to cycle to Bern. We took the funicular up Harder Kulm to take in the amazing views of the 2 major lakes encompassing Interlaken, Brienersee and Thunsee, and although it was slightly cloudy, we still had great views of Jungfrau and the other mountains surrounding Interlaken. We then hiked/ ran down from the Harder Kulm viewing, taking just under 1.5 hours to descend about 1300m. To cool off, we went for a swim in Burgseeli, a small lake near Brienersee. Here we swam with the lobsters and had fun using the 7m diving board!



Above: View of Jung Frau from the Helder Klum viewpoint.



Top Right: View of Lake Thun from the Helder Klum viewpoint.

Bottom Right: Picture break half way down from the Helder Klum viewpoint.



After our swim, it was time to get back on the bikes and cycle to Bern. This was a great cycle, with a few small climbs so we got a great view of Thun on our way to Bern but also very quick, allowing us to cover 60km in about 2 hours 40mins. Our host at Bern was also very kind, cooking for us while we had fun swimming in the River Aare. The Aare is a very fast flowing river which allows you to jump in and float down right down to the Houses of Parliament and although cold, it was a fun to be swept down so fast that you couldn't get anywhere swimming against the flow.

**Day 6:** From Bern we had a long and 105km to cycle to get us to Lausanne. This was an extremely difficult day as we had to keep to a very busy road due to our thin bike tyres, and every time we deviated from the busy road we were met with very steep climbs to navigate. However, by the end of the day we had reached Lake Lemman, our last lake of the trip!

**Day 7:** Time for our final stop in Switzerland – Geneva! We cycled 65km along Lake Lemman taking in the beautiful views although slightly sore from the long day before. When we arrived in Geneva, we went for a little swim in Lake Lemman, but with all our stuff and a lot of people around, we did not feel comfortable having a proper swim so went to drop our stuff at our hosts' home and enjoyed a lovely dinner with them.



Sunflowers overlooking Lake Lemman

**Day 8:** We had a rest day in Geneva to enjoy the city. We started our day at the Natural History Museum of Geneva (like Tom could resist...) before spending the rest of the day at the Bains des Paquis. Although this lido costs CHF2 to enter unlike the beach we went to the day before. It had 100m measured out so we could do a more structured swim. It also had a rock climbing wall which when you fell off, you fell into the lake. We had a lot of fun on the rock climbing wall but decided we were probably a bit too old/ large for the zip-wire.



Rainbow in the Jet D'Eau in Geneva. We decided to go underneath the jet, but as it ejects 500l/s we got very wet! We were able to see a full circle rainbow though!

**Day 9:** Our cycle to Lyon from Geneva marked our longest day, our first cycle over 100 miles and our longest ever cycle by being 178km. The day started early at 7am with a slight climb out of Geneva. The Swiss/ French boarder was very underwhelming but marked the end of all the hills of Switzerland. We followed the River Rhone but then headed straight to Lyon instead of continuing to cycle along its meander. It was a very hot day and we had to stop at a supermarket to buy more water. We went a bit off track to find an open supermarket and deviated a bit from our planned route. This meant we entered into Lyon from a different direction and a bit busier roads. Unfortunately, the French drivers bit not leave as much room for cyclists and liked to beep their



horns at us even when there was a cycle lane. Then, to make things worse, a huge thunderstorm started and we had to duck for cover and sit it out. By this time it was 7pm and we were keen to finish the day. Luckily it cleared up very quickly and we could continue into Lyon. On our arrival our host for that night was surprised with how far we had come in one day (we had cycled a similar distance than the Tour de France riders that day), and how little equipment we were carrying (a recurring situation on our trip). The 178km felt a lot easier than the 105km to Lausanne a few days earlier so we must have improved our cycling during our trip!



The view as we cycled along the River Rhone.

**Day 10:** This day was meant to be a 220km cycle to Dijon (a slightly mad idea seeing as we had done 178km the day before). However, continued bad weather including strong winds made cycling feel very unsafe, especially with how close lorry drivers overtook, even when there was a cycle lane, so we decided to cycle instead to the train station and catch a train to Dijon. We spent the afternoon exploring Dijon in between bouts of rain and, of course, bought some mustard.



The Darcy Garden in Dijon in a brief moment of no rain.

**Day 11:** As to our original plan, we caught the train to Paris and had a little cycle around Paris before our Eurostar train home. Paris was gearing up for the final day of the Tour de France so it was very

exciting to cycle around the city. Unfortunately we couldn't stay for the Tour de France as the cost of hotels and the train were too much for the extra night so we instead headed to the Eurodespatch to leave our bikes and then caught the train back to London. The weather in London was absolutely abysmal and made the last 45 minutes of cycling to our flat leave like hours. But we made it back from our first cycle tour with no major mishaps and having had really enjoyed the Swiss landscape, food and people. We would really recommend cycling the lakes route in Switzerland – but make sure you take a bike with slightly thicker tyres in order to avoid more major roads!